THE SPEED OF PAIN

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Why healing has a speed limit and why that limit protects you.

By Sum Bunny

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Why healing has a speed limit
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I. The Restaurant

We were at a hip spot downtown, tucked just far enough off the highway to feel secluded, but close enough to the train tracks that you could feel the rumble when a heavy line moved through. Christmas decorations were up, casting a low, warm light against the evening.

Around us, the room was loud with the specific energy of people unwinding. Most of the people were drinking, but Jim and I were sober—happily so. The conversation kept its pace, the room stayed loud, and the sentence cut through it.

Jim spoke about a trauma he had processed in the past, something heavy that had taken him a long time to carry. He paused, looked toward the entrance, and shared a realization that I haven't been able to shake since.

"*Someone told me once,*" he said, "*that we move at the speed of pain*."

The sentence stayed, long after the moment passed.

We live in a world of high-speed everything. We have same-day delivery and "hack your trauma in 30 days" workshops. We expect our hearts to update like software—download the patch, restart the system, and run at full speed.

But the soul doesn't run on silicon; it runs on physics. And as Jim reminded me that night, you cannot hack the physics of a broken heart.

II. The Physics of Heavy Air

We tend to think of emotions as "soft" things—misty, internal feelings that live inside our heads. But if you actually pay attention to what it feels like to be sad or grieving, it doesn't feel soft. It feels like *weight*.

In the framework of *The Emotional Field*, we describe emotion not as a feeling, but as a **Field**—like gravity or magnetism. Imagine walking through air. It's easy; you can run, jump, and pivot with almost zero effort. Now, imagine walking through chest-deep water. Suddenly, every movement costs ten times as much energy. You aren't weaker; the medium is just denser.

Pain acts like high-gravity or thick water. It creates "drag". When you are grieving or processing trauma, the atmosphere around you thickens. Simple tasks—answering an email, washing the dishes, smiling at a stranger—suddenly require immense force.

When Jim was moving slowly through his healing, he wasn't being lazy. He wasn't "stuck." He was moving through a heavier atmosphere. You wouldn't judge a swimmer for moving slower than a runner. Why do we judge a grieving person for moving slower than a happy one?

III. The Safety Brake

There is a mechanical reason for this slowness. In systems theory, we talk about a force called **Return**. Simply put, Return is the drive for *baseline* stability and safety. It is the part of you that wants to keep the ship from sinking.

When you are hurt, your internal system slams on the brakes. This isn't a malfunction; it is a survival mechanism. Your nervous system detects a threat (the pain) and immediately prioritizes safety over speed. It diverts energy away from "Progress" and pours it all into "Protection".

The conscious mind often wants to "move on." We want to be productive; we want to date again; we want to feel normal. But the body is screaming, "*Not yet*."

"The Speed of Pain" is effectively the speed limit set by your need for safety. You cannot accelerate until your system believes it is safe to do so. Pushing harder doesn't make you go faster; it just burns out the engine.

IV. The Ghost Rules

There is another factor that slows us down. We often carry **Recursive Shadows**—decisions from the past that turn into invisible rules for the future.

Trauma writes these rules in permanent marker. If you were betrayed by someone you trusted, your mind writes a new rule: "*Trust is expensive*." If you were humiliated for speaking up, the rule becomes: "*Silence is safe*."

In the present, you might be trying to do something simple, like text a new friend back. But while your finger hovers over the send button, you are unconsciously negotiating with a dozen invisible "Ghost Rules" that scream *Danger!*

This negotiation takes time. It creates lag. Jim moved at the speed of pain because every step forward required him to dismantle a Ghost Rule that was blocking the path. You cannot rush that negotiation. You have to earn the permission to pass.

V. The Paradox of Resistance

So, how do we speed up?

The paradox is that trying to speed up usually slows us down. We try to ignore the pain, suppress it, or "power through" it. But in physics, resistance generates heat. When you fight the water, you create turbulence.

This brings us to **Conductivity**—the measure of how easily a signal passes through you.

If you resist the pain—if you tense up and refuse to feel it—your conductivity drops. The signal gets stuck. It bounces around inside you, creating noise and friction. The "Speed of Pain" drops to zero because you are standing still, fighting the current.

The only way to move is to stop fighting the drag. When you "conduct" the pain—when you let yourself feel the weight of the water without judging it—you become hydrodynamic. You don't necessarily move *fast*, but you move *forward*.

Jim didn't heal by forcing himself to run on land. He healed by learning how to swim in the heavy water.

VI. Conclusion

As we sat there, the train rumbled past outside, shaking the glasses on the table. The Christmas lights glowed, indifferent to the years that had passed or the pain that had been processed.

Jim took a sip of his mocktail and smiled. It wasn't the manic smile of someone who had "beaten" his trauma. It was the calm smile of someone who had survived the swim.

We move at the speed of pain. That isn't a punishment. It’s a protection. It is your soul’s way of ensuring that you don't arrive at the destination before you are whole enough to survive it.

So if you feel like you are moving in slow motion today, if the air feels heavy and the steps feel impossible—be gentle with yourself. You aren't failing. You are just obeying the physics of the field. You can't hurry the heart. Keep the beat, and don't retreat. We heal at the speed of pain.

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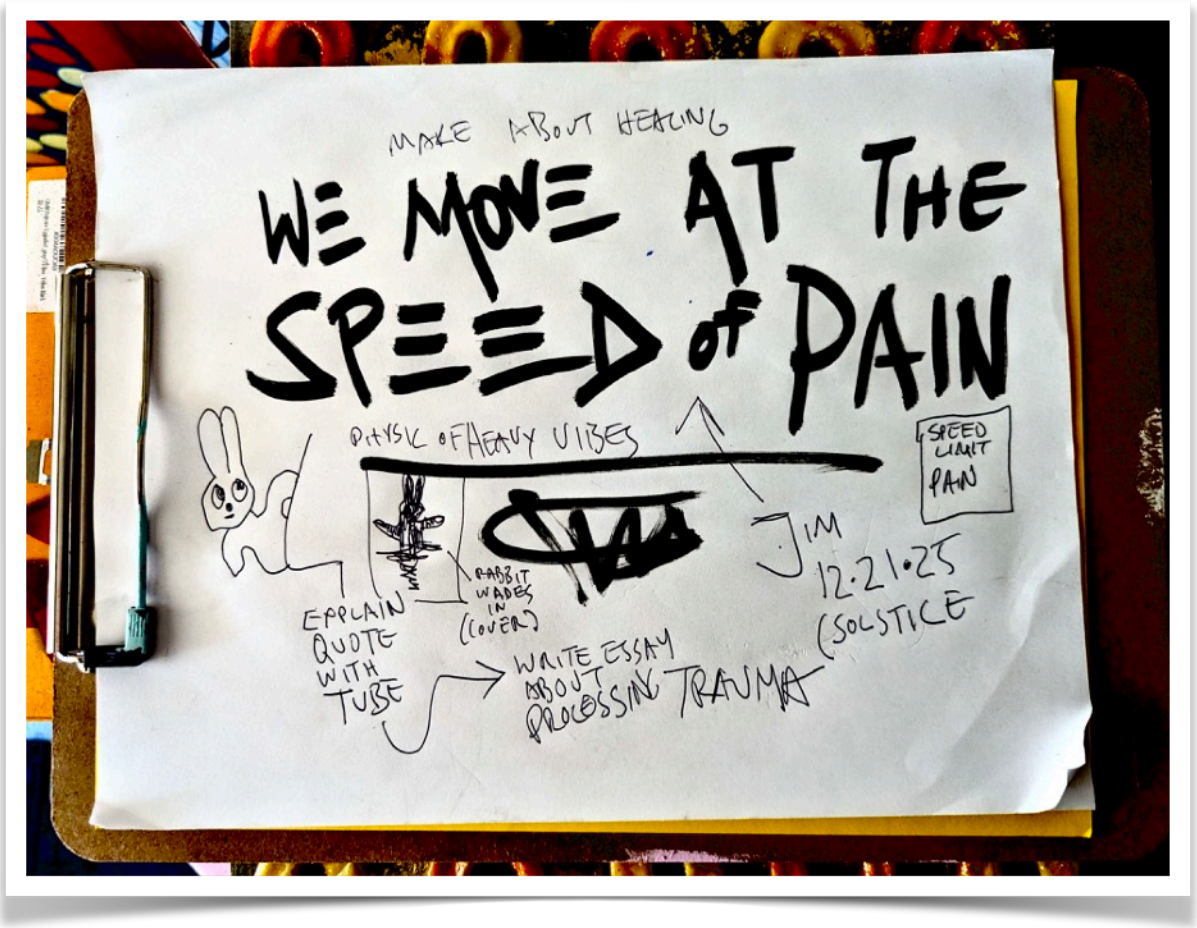
This was written through a collaboration between a human author and AI systems acting as analytical tools. The machines provided structure; the human provided judgment. Nothing appears here that the author did not personally create, refine, choose, and claim.

HEY JOSIANE,
SLOW IS GOLD.
SUM BUNNY LOVES YOU!!!



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